

INTRO-

Introductory Illustration

- ***How do you find God’s direction & God’s guidance in your life?*** Or as some people phrase it: “How do I know God’s WILL for this decision?” or “How do I know God’s WILL for my life?”
 - Where do you go? Who do you turn to? What sources do you consult?
 - Who advises you? Counsels you? Helps you? Directs you?
- You may ask: What is God’s Will for my life? For this decision? For that decision? How do I find direction? Guidance? Help? Leading? Teaching? Instruction?
- What do I do? How do I live? Where do I go? What choice to make? What person to marry? What job to take? How to spend my time, energy?

****READ THE TEXT****

I believe the answer is simpler than we might assume. Of course we cannot know the **“hidden”** and sovereign will of God *before* it happens (we know it after it happens!). Love God, love others, live with integrity – ***do what you want & trust in God!***

Background to Psalm 25

- **Theme:** It seems that from this psalm David is in the midst of a hardship where he needs immediate guidance and direction from God while his enemies lurk over him (vv.16, 19).
 - Note that LORD (Yahweh) occurs 10x in the Psalm (v.1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15).
- **Note some of the attributes of God that will come to the spotlight in this Psalm:**

The **faithfulness** of God (no one will be put to shame, v.3).
The **truthfulness** of God (his paths are paths of truth, v.4-5).
The **salvation** of God (God is Savior, v.5).
The **mercy and love** of God (which are from old, v.6, 10)
The **goodness and uprightness** of God (v.8)
The **forgiveness** of God (v.11)
The **wisdom** of God (he counsels His people, v.14).
The **graciousness** of God (v.16)
The **power** of God (to rescue his people (v.15)
The **protection** of God (God delivers his people (v.20)

When you must make an important decision in your life & you need direction & guidance, God’s primary manual CALLS you to focus on HIM and His CHARACTER!

THESIS—Today I want to show you how you can find guidance/direction for your life.

The key word in the psalm: **“ways”** or **“paths”** (6x).

I. HAVE A CONFIDENT TRUST IN GOD! (1-3)

Internal trust in God

a. Pray to God often

- i. To lift up your soul refers to trusting in God! (v.1-2).**

b. Ask God for confidence

- i. Let me not be ashamed. Whatever may come; whatever opposition, hostilities, persecutions, questionings. *The psalmist has the idea of: “God, let me not find you ‘untrustworthy’ and be ashamed that you failed me.”*

c. Believe God’s sovereignty

- i. Let all who *wait for you* not be ashamed.
- ii. Trust in God’s sovereign plan! Be trusting! Be confident! Be certain of God’s sovereign decrees.

iii. **And WAIT for God!** To wait for God is to hope and actively and aggressively trust in God (*no passivity!*).

1. The verb “wait” actually means to “*wait for with eager expectation.*” The word meaning could be illustrated with a **rubber-band**—it is stretched and stretched and stretched, farther, and farther, and farther—yet it continues to stay connected (=to endure, to await, to persist).
2. Therefore, hope is **NOT** a passive sitting back with the arms folded. Rather, hope **IS** an active, deliberate decision to be stretched farther and farther while *continuing in confident hope that God will deliver.*

d. This is where it ALL begins—a Godward, inward, upward hope!

- i. Heb 11:6 – without faith it is impossible to please God!
- ii. John 14:1 – don’t let your heart be troubled; believe in God & believe also in me

How to trust in God?

1. Intimately Know God! (LORD...)

Just like a friend: the more you know him the more you’ll trust him.

2. Daily Recommit Trust! (I Lift Up...)

The world detonates its bombs at us constantly attempting to lure us to worldliness & take our eyes off of God & lift up our souls to something other than God --- **but we need to recommit ourselves to the LORD & our own hearts frequently to Him.**

3. Actively Hope in God! (All who HOPE...)

Like an eager parent waits up into the late hours of the night for the arrival of the son/daughter from an outing, so it is that we need to actively, lookingly, aggressively, pursuingly wait on GOD (active!)

II. HAVE A RELENTLESS SEARCHING OF SCRIPTURE! (4-7)

Outward/External following of God

This is about the internalization of God’s Truth/Word.

a. Ask God to teach you truth (4)

- i. Make known to me your ways & paths. Must be “Confident and Submissive”

- ii. **The way of God is found in the WORD of God.**
 - 1. Be the godly man who meditates on the Word & be like a strong tree bearing fruit for Him! Walk in His ways!
 - 2. Read the Word, pray the Word **and obey it—walk in its ways.**
- b. **Remember to worship God alone (5)**
 - i. **NOTE David’s argument here:**
 - 1. **God Teach Me!**
 - 2. **After all, you’ve saved me!**
 - 3. **And, I’ve patiently hoped & waited for you all day long!**
- c. **Cling to God’s kind compassion (6-7)**
 - i. And now David adds that God should *remember His own* compassions & covenant-keeping lovingkindness.

v.7a- Don’t remember the sins of my youth-- God is not as concerned about our past sins (“youth”), as He is about our present spiritual condition. **Remember that!**

God the perfect Potter loves to take mud & dirt & form a most beautiful, brilliant & transformed vase for all to see His glory & marvel at His mercy!

Mark it: **when God remembers His mercy, he forgets our sins!**

- ii. Indeed, God’s compassion and love is **everlasting**. Remember, God’s character is **UNCHANGING**. This is what we call the **IMMUTABILITY** of God (=He *cannot* change!).
- iii. **Malachi 3:6** "For I, the LORD, do not change;"
- d. **Have YOU...**
 - i. **Recognized your need to be taught?**
 - ii. **Is God your savior?**
 - 1. ***Submission is not to a bunch of rules but to a Savior!***
 - iii. **Do you patiently wait & actively pursue Him?**
 - iv. **Psalm 119:12, 33, 66-68!**

III. **HAVE A GOD-CENTEREDNESS THROUGH LIFE! (8-11)** ***Internal belief in God’s character***

The central part of the psalm. The meat of the sandwich is right here. If there is ever anything to set your mind upon during “decision-making time”—**it is the unchanging, unfailing, unmatched character of God that gives confidence!**

- a. **He is good (8a)**
 - i. The attribute of God’s goodness means that God always does what is perfect & in accord with the rest of his attributes & can never do ill, bad, sin, evil or make a mistake.

- ii. It is more than “moral goodness” however. The goodness of God is associated with His **covenantal fidelity** --- the Lord is good for He WILL fulfill ALL his promises that He makes
- iii. Give thanks to the LORD for *He is good* (1 Chron 16:34)

Illustration of God’s goodness (from Piper, *Desiring God*, 182-83).

1. George Mueller—man of prayer who built orphanages in England in the mid 19th century—found out one day that his daughter was struck with severe typhoid fever. She came to the *brink of death*, but through the prayers of many she was spared. He found God’s goodness overwhelming in this trial of wisdom and faith.
2. **THEN**, a few years after that, Mueller’s wife, Mary, died of rheumatic fever after being married **39 years**.
3. Shortly after the death of his dear wife, he preached her funeral. The text of his “funeral sermon” was **Psalm 119:68** (You are good and do good) and his three points were:
 - a. *The Lord was good, and did good, in giving her to me.*
 - b. *The Lord was good, and did good, in so long leaving her to me.*
 - c. *The Lord was good, and did good, in taking her from me.*

iv. What amazing trust in the **GOODNESS OF GOD!**

b. He is upright (8b)

- i. That God is upright means that God is not crooked, not unbalanced, not swayed or bent. He is straight & his way is always straight, full of perfection.
- ii. The idea here is moral and legal integrity. There is no perversion here.
 1. ***regardless of how crooked or corrupt or bent society becomes, the LORD maintains order b/c He Himself is upright, true, perfect & full of uprightness.***

iii. Psalm 92:15 – the Lord is upright

c. He instructs (8b-9)

- i. He teaches sinners in the way to go.
 1. **God is infinite in knowledge**
 2. **God is perfect in wisdom**
 3. **God is sovereign in everything**
- ii. NOTE: God instructs you! ***Taught of God (John 6:44).***
 1. **Are you willing to be taught?**

d. He leads perfectly (10)

- i. All God’s paths are *lovingkindness & truth*. These two words together refer to God’s ***constancy & fidelity in love promised to His covenantal people***. He can’t break His Word b/c he is joined with them by *loving-oath* and He is faithful & true and will complete His Word!
 1. There is a depth & a fidelity to His covenantal love!

e. He forgives (11b)

- i. God forgive iniquity for it is great—*abundant/much/many*.
 1. **God abundantly forgives through the atoning work of Christ!**
(the unclean, immoral woman in Luke 7:47)
 2. **Romans 5:20** but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more (cf. Psalm 103:3-12). **DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?**
Remember: God forgives sinners who have sinned greatly, abundantly, manifoldly! God displays his grace, mercy & glory in forgiving rebels by grace!
 3. *Have you been forgiven? Pardoned? Has your sin been lifted off you & put on Christ?*

F. HE GLORIFIES HIMSELF (1 1A)

- i. God does it “on account of *His Name!*”

God’s glory is central in decision making!
God is concerned about making HIS name great!

IV. HAVE A NECESSARY FEAR OF GOD! (12-15)

A lifestyle of worship to God

There is a rhetorical question here about a person who *fears God*—who fears God & what is he like?

a. WHO: *the one God instructs*

- i. This is the man who “**fears the LORD**”
- ii. Ecc 12:13 – the conclusion is **FEAR GOD**
- iii. 1 Pet 2:17 – we are to fear **GOD**
 1. Here, then, the idea of *fearing God*, is an attitude of **reverence** and **awe** toward God which then is transformed into an appropriate manner of living.
A Christian knows the fear of God **just as** someone in S Florida knows the power of a mighty hurricane. ***You stand in awe of its power, grandeur & might!***
 2. It is the heartfelt responsiveness and willingness to learn of the LORD & OBEY what He says.

b. WHAT: *he will prosper & have blessing* (13-14)

- i. Lit. ‘his soul will dwell/lodge with goodness/in goodness’

c. HOW: *his eyes are continually on the LORD* (15)

- i. Is this said of you?
- ii. Are your eyes **continually toward the LORD?**
 1. **Just as** a young son constantly looks behind him to make sure his dad is with him on a day-long hike through the forest, so the child of God is **continually** looking toward the LORD!
 2. **Pray continually (1 Thess 5:17);** Keep your eyes fixed on Him (Heb 12.2)

There is no better place to be in the decision making process than having your eyes captivated by the glory of God, awed with a fear of God & gazing upon the sovereignty of God!

V. **HAVE A CONSTANT PASSION FOR INTEGRITY! (16-22)**
Resolve to live a pure life

See “**integrity**” in v.21 – “integrity” & uprightness. That which is whole, full, straight, unbending. integrity/wholeness & upright/straightness.

*Just as a bride’s dress is **without spot, stain, blemish** --- so the believer strives to demonstrate this with his life!*

Unveil this person anywhere and you’ll find the same person on the OUTSIDE as you do on the INSIDE; in the MIND, in the HEART, in the WORDS, in the LIFE.
He is consistent, blameless & full of “wholeness”.

- a. **Turn to God in hardship (16)**
 - i. Turn, be gracious for I’m lonely & afflicted
- b. **Keep on confessing your sins**
 - i. See v.7 – do not remember my *transgressions*
 - ii. V.11 – you forgive my iniquities for they are many
 - iii. V.18 – forgive all my sins
 - iv. *A life of confession is the life of a Christian.*
- c. **Live uprightly before God**
 - i. Let the integrity guard me *because* I wait for you (21)

NOTE what is **MISSING** ----

- 1. an excessive amount of thinking & self-confidence
- 2. an excessive seeking of advice & thoughts of others
- 3. an overly worried, fearful, terrified life of anxiety.
- 4. impulsive decisions based on feelings, thoughts or experience.
> **what IS here is trusting God, relying on Him, resting on His character.**

CONCL-

Concluding Illustration

Don’t be hasty in decision making. Pursue God. Pray on it. Wait patiently. Walk in obedience. Trust Him for the results knowing that He will guard and guide and watch over you.